

place, the longer things take to happen, and it is incumbent upon us to get this joint committee up and running.

I might say to the gentleman that I know he has suggested a commission, but I feel very strongly that it is our responsibility as a Congress in a bipartisan way to look at these issues and have oversight of these issues. And in accepting and understanding that responsibility, and not being relieved by somebody else or some other commission of that responsibility, this was one of the best ways we knew to do this.

We looked back at precedent, even when the gentleman's side of the aisle was in the majority, and found a precedent for doing this in a bipartisan, bicameral way when the Democrats wanted to do it, and we thought it made sense and so that is exactly what we did.

So we feel strongly that we, in a bipartisan way, are responsible for looking at these issues, and I would imagine by next week we will address this by whatever means is necessary to get it up and going. And also next week, I would assume that the Speaker would make those appointments that are necessary to fill that joint committee.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the leader, and reclaiming my time, I think I have suggested this before, but I believe it would be useful, perhaps at some point in time in the near term, that the Speaker convene the leadership of both sides of the aisle to discuss how we are going forward.

I understand there were precedents for the action that was taken, but it was not taken after discussions with this side of the aisle. And as the majority leaders know, both on the Senate side that was the case and on the House side it was the case.

Again, I agree with the gentleman's proposition that the public wants to see us move ahead together and respond to this crisis together because those who have suffered are our focus, not party politics or ideological differences, but helping those who are hurting and making sure that we protect those who may still yet be vulnerable. I think we can best do that by working together.

On another subject and moving on, can the majority leader tell me where we stand on reconciliation? Press reports indicate that there is a delay in the development of those bills, as called for in the budget resolution, at least for some period of time. Can the gentleman bring us up to date on what the present status of reconciliation is?

Mr. DELAY. I appreciate the gentleman continuing to yield.

Entitlement reform is still one of the highest priorities of the House this fall. However, due to the events of the last 10 days, it has been replaced as the number one priority. Therefore, we will likely postpone consideration of these very important reforms for a number of weeks.

We are still trying to decide when we might approach this issue, based upon

all the issues that are flooding in from all Members of things that we need to do in light of the disaster of Katrina. So I just think it is probably a little early for us to give specific dates as to when we would go to markup and those kinds of things until we get a better handle on what we need to be doing to make sure that we are doing everything that we can to take care of those victims of Katrina.

Mr. HOYER. I appreciate the gentleman's comments, Mr. Speaker. I am sure the gentleman is familiar with the letter that the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) and Mr. CONRAD and others have sent with reference to reconciliation. We are concerned, of course, because of Katrina and for the exact reason we have postponed reconciliation, we are very concerned that the needs are so large at this point in time that we need to be very careful about the issue of Medicaid and, frankly, the issue of additional tax cuts.

In light of the fact we have just spent \$62 billion additional, which we did not anticipate and which will exacerbate, therefore, our budget deficit, and which absolutely had to be done, everybody, almost everybody supported that effort, including the majority leader and myself, but we hope that we can perhaps have discussions about that issue as well.

Lastly, Mr. Leader, I talked about the long term and Thanksgiving. October. We have a number of holidays in October. Could the gentleman perhaps amplify on what his expectation is of the first 2 weeks in October?

My understanding is the probability is that we will be in Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of the first week of October, but the second week of October, can the gentleman give us some thoughts on what that might be in light of the Jewish holidays and the Christopher Columbus holiday?

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, I would note that the week of October 10, which is the second week of October, and due to the way that Columbus Day and Yom Kippur fall that week, there is only a very narrow window of time when we could be voting. And with the expectation that we could potentially be in session until the Friday before Thanksgiving, we would suggest that the House follow the Senate and adjourn for the entire week of October 10.

As for the week of October 3, Rosh Hashanah will make it very difficult for many Members to return to the Capitol prior to the evening of Wednesday, October 5, and at this point in time we anticipate having votes that week but not before Wednesday night.

We will watch as things unfold with regard to the needs of floor time and we will make further pronouncements as we get closer to that week.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for that comment, Mr. Speaker, and presume, therefore, that we are reasonably safe in advising our Members that the second week of October we will

probably not be in session; is that accurate, Mr. Leader?

Mr. DELAY. The gentleman is correct.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the majority leader for his information.

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ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2005, AND HOUR OF MEETING ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2005

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at noon on Monday next, and further, that when the House adjourns on that day, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, September 13, 2005, for morning hour debates.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THORNBERRY). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

PERMISSION FOR COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY TO HAVE UNTIL MIDNIGHT, SEPTEMBER 9, 2005, TO FILE A REPORT ON H.R. 3132, CHILDREN'S SAFETY ACT OF 2005

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary may have until midnight on Friday, September 9, 2005, to file a report to accompany H.R. 3132.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

AMENDMENT PROCESS FOR H.R. 889, COAST GUARD AND MARITIME TRANSPORTATION ACT OF 2005

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, the Committee on Rules may meet next week to grant a rule for the consideration of H.R. 889, the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2005, which may require that amendments be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD prior to their consideration on the floor.

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure ordered the bill reported on May 18 and filed its report with the House on July 28. Members should draft their amendments to the text of the bill as reported by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.